

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 01799 101003Z

14

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SAM-01 ACDA-05 OMB-01

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O 100917Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5942

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1799

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN

SUBJECT: ROKG DESIRES TO REBUT DPRK PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE

REF: SEOUL 1763, DTG 0908522Z MAR 76

SUMMARY: ACTING FONMIN HAS PROPOSED COUNTERING RECENT DPRK
PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE AND ASKS WHETHER WE WISH TO JOIN IN.
END SUMMARY.

1. IN MEETING AT FONMIN MARCH 10, ACTING FONMIN LHO SHIN-YONG
TOOK UP SUBJECT RECENT NORTH KOREAN LETTER TO PARLIAMENTS
AND GOVERNMENTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD ATTACKING ROK/US FOR
CREATING TENSE SITUATION IN KOREA AND ANCILLIARY PROPAGANDA
CAMPAIGN DPRK APPARENTLY NOW MOUNTING WORLDWIDE. LHO
EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT RECENT NORTHERN EFFORT WHICH HE SAW AS
FIRST SALVO IN MAJOR CAMPAIGN TO WIN SUPPORT AT COLOMBO NON-
ALIGNED CONFERENCE AND 31ST UNGA, PUT ROK IN BAD LIGHT. MANY
THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES PARTICULARLY IN LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 01799 101003Z

WOULD UNFORTUNATELY BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ARGUMENT THAT ROK WAS REAL

AGGRESSOR UNLESS IT WAS REBUTTED. LHO EXPRESSED THANKS FOR WHAT US ALREADY DOING TO COUNTER DPRK'S STATEMENTS AT UN IN NEW YORK, NOTING THAT ROK WAS PARTICULARLY WORRIED ABOUT NORTH KOREAN USE OF UN PLATFORM AS MEANS OF UNDERMINING VIEWS OF KOREAN NATIONALS LIVING IN THE US. ACTING FONMIN THEN INDICATED THAT IN VIEW OF SITUATION HE WAS DRAFTING A RESPONSE TO DPRK FOR PUBLIC USE. HE ASKED WHETHER USG WAS PLANNING ANY FURTHER PUBLIC REACTION OF ITS OWN.

2. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF PLANNED ACTION OTHER THAN THAT ALREADY BEING TAKEN AT UN. HE AGREED THAT DPRK LETTER AND PRONOUNCEMENTS QUITE POSSIBLY REPRESENTED INAUGURATION 1976 CAMPAGIN, WHILE NOTING ACTUAL CONTENT OF NORTH'S STATEMENTS DID NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY UNUSUAL. NORTH'S STATEMENTS MADE CLEAR THEY HAD RECEIVED MESSAGE THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO DETER AGGRESSION FROM THE NORTH AND THIS WAS A PLUS. IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT SAID AMBASSADOR TO EVALUATE POTENTIAL SUCCESS OF NORTH KOREAN OFFENSIVE. THEIR STATEMENTS WERE OFTEN DEFENSIVE AND SO OVER-STATED THAT TO LARGE EXTENT MANY IN WORLD DISCOUNTED THEM AND WE SHOULD NOT LOWER OURSELVES TO MAKING SIMILARLY DEFENSIVE RESPONSE. AT SAME TIME WASHINGTON MIGHT CONSIDER IT USEFUL TO DEVELOP SOME COUNTER TO DPRK PROPAGANDA AND AMBASSADOR AGREED TO REFER QUESTION TO WASHINGTON. WITH REGARD NK EFFORTS GAIN SUPPORT KOREAN RESIDENTS IN US, AMBASSADOR REITERATED POINT PREVIOUSLY MADE TO ROKS THAT WE WOULD WELCOME ANY EVIDENCE THEY DEVELOP.

3. URGING EARLY REPLY HIS QUESTION, BY MARCH 11 IF POSSIBLE, LHO SAID HE WOULD LIKE USG ALSO TO CONSIDER UNILATERAL ROK REBUTTAL EVEN IF WASHINGTON DECIDED IT DID NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE. HE SAID HE PLANNED TO CLEAR WITH US IN DETAIL PROPOSED ROKG APPROACH BEFORE MAKING IT.

4. COMMENT: BELIEVE THERE MAY BE CERTAIN VALUE IN PARTICIPATING IN A SELECTIVE AND JUDICIOUS EKORT TO REBUT THIS MAJOR NORTH KOREAN CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT ROK. ARGUMENTS SHOULD HIGHLIGHT PEACEFUL NATURE ROK POSITION, DETERRENT PURPOSE US TROOP PRESENCE AND BASIC COMPATABILITY OF ROK AS AVERSE DPRK PURPOSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS TO THIRD WORLD EXPECTATIONS. BELIEVE APPROACH MIGHT BE BEST IF TAILORED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 01799 101003Z

SPECIFIC COUNTRIES WHERE DPRK OFFENSIVE MOST APT TO HAVE SUCCESS AND SUGGEST THAT OUR OWN EFFORT MIGHT BE FOCUSED IN CONTEXT OF PROPOSED APPROACHES TO NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES OUTLINED STATE 37573. REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS. SNEIDER

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